

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CPR-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 EUR-12 SY-05 MCE-00

ACDA-07 TRSE-00 AID-05 IGA-02 /112 W

-----007802 080553Z /16

R 071435Z SEP 77

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5525

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 5349

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, ET, US

SUBJ: RUMOR MILL ACTIVE ON US-ETHIOPIAN RAPPROACHMENT

REF: ADDIS ABABA 5009

1. EMBASSY IS BEING BESEIGED BY OTHER DIPLOMATS FOR CONFIRMATION OF CONTINUING RUMORS THAT US AND EPMG HAVE CONDUCTED SECRET TALKS TO REESTABLISH GOOD RELATIONS AND SOME ASPECTS OF FORMER BILATERAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP. MOST PERSISTENT OF THESE RUMORS INVOLVES PURPORTED VISIT TO WASHINGTON IN AUGUST OF EPMG DELEGATION HEADED BY MIKAEL IMRU (REFTEL), WHICH DESPITE OUR EFFORTS, DOESN'T SEEM TO GO AWAY. ACCORDING TO MOST PREVALENT VERSION, DELEGATION FIRST WENT TO ISRAEL. US TRIP WAS THEN ARRANGED THROUGH ISRAELI INTERMEDIACY, WITH US VISAS OBTAINED IN TEL AVIV. ANOTHER VERSION HAS EPMG DELEGATION, HEADED BY EITHER MIKAEL IMRU OR MOFA PERSEC DAWIT WOLDE-GHIORGIS, MEETING WITH SECRETARY VANCE DURING LATTER'S LAST VISIT TO ISRAEL. THEY DO NOT SEEM TO

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STEM FROM CHARGE'S RECENT MEETING WITH MENGISTU.

2. NO ONE HAS BEEN BOLD ENOUGH YET TO SUGGEST THAT US HAS ALREADY RESUMED DELIVERIES OF EQUIPMENT OR SPARE PARTS. THERE ARE INCREASING STORIES, HOWEVER, THAT AS RESULT OF ALLEGED MEETING(S) PARA ONE ABOVE, USG HAS GIVEN ITS TACIT CONSENT TO ISRAELI DELIVERIES

OF SPARE PARTS OF US ORIGIN OR, ALTERNATIVELY,
ISRAEL IS ALREADY MAKING SUCH DELIVERIES WITHOUT US
KNOWLEDGE.

3. LATEST TO HIT EMBASSY ON THIS SUBJECT WAS FRG DE-
FENSE ATTACHE VON MEUENCHOW, WHO SAID HE HAD "CONFIRMED"
REPORTS OF VANCE-DAWIT MEETING AND OF ISRAELI DELI-
VERIES OF US-MADE SPARE PARTS. MOREOVER, HE CLAIMED
TO HAVE ABSOLUTE KNOWLEDGE OF RECENT UNPUBLICIZED
PRIVATE VISIT TO ADDIS OF FORMER CHIEF MAAG BGEN YOW
(NOW RETIRED) AS FOLLOW-UP TO ABOVE DEVELOPMENTS.
NO AMOUNT OF EMBASSY DENIAL COULD DISSUADE HIM OF
TRUTH OF HIS HYPOTHESES, WHICH HE SAID USG MUST HAVE
DECIDED TO HANDLE IN THIS FASHION IN ORDER TO KEEP
EMBASSY COMPLETELY IGNORANT, SO THAT EMBASSY COULD
TRUTHFULLY PROFESS NO KNOWLEDGE.

4. COMMENT: FOREGOING IS FOR INFO ONLY SINCE THERE
DOES NOT SEEM TO BE MUCH WE CAN DO ABOUT IT. RUMORS
ARE CONTINUING OF AURA OF WISHFUL THINKING BEING
INDULGED IN BY SOME OF OUR DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES
COUPLED WITH HASTY AND ERRONEOUS POLITICAL ANALYSIS
THAT (A) EPMG PRESSURE ON US HAS EASED, (B) EPMG
IS NOT HAPPY WITH SOVIETS, AND (C) ANYTHING ISRAELIS
MAY OR MAY NOT BE DOING HERE OBVIOUSLY HAS OUR APPRO-
VAL, ERGO ALL THESE RUMORS MUST IN FACT BE TRUE
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EVEN IF WE WON'T ADMIT IT. IF NOTHING ELSE, RUMORS
HAVE HAD AT LEAST ONE MODESTLY BENEFICIAL SIDE EFFECT,
IN THAT EVEN SOVIET EMBASSY HAS PICKED THEM UP AND
BEGUN ASKING US ABOUT THEM. ONE COULD EVEN READ
RECENT MORE PRONOUNCED SOVIET TILT IN ETHIOPIAN DIREC-
TION IN OGADEN CONFLICT AS HAVING BE INFLUENCED TO
SOME EXTENT BY CONCERN THAT REPORTS THAT "THE AMERI-
CANS ARE COMING" MIGHT CONTAIN SOME ELEMENT OF TRUTH.
TIENKEN

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